

Roll Camera, Please...
An Owner's Manual to On-Location Production

The Utah Film Industry is a vital, growing industry in the state. What most Utahns don't know is that the film and video industry has brought over a billion dollars to the state's coffers over the last ten years. Major motion pictures, television movies, television series and mini series, documentaries, commercials, industrial/corporate training films, music videos, still photo shoots All go on location. And many choose Utah.

They come here for the great scenery, recreational opportunities, a knowledgeable work force, a supportive government and business environment, and a sense of community.

The Utah Film Commission, a division of the Governor's office of Economic Development, was founded in 1977 to attract more production to the state. Production in the state is nothing new. Utah locations have back dropped motion pictures since the early 1900's. The first feature film shot in Utah was an Edison Company production entitled "Salt Lake, Utah and Its Surroundings" in 1912.

Film and video production is a nearly ideal industry: it doesn't pollute, and the income generated is deposited into the local economy in many ways: local hires, hotel rooms, hardware stores, equipment rentals, dry cleaners, gas stations, catering businesses, car rental agencies, miscellaneous purchases by the cast and crew while on location, even doctor and dental visits.

Production is also known to have a trickle down economic effect after the shoot has wrapped. It is long known that film / television locations are great tourist attractions. The location for the film "Galaxy Quest" was Goblin Valley State Park. Tourism numbers in that area have jumped. Statistics show that the Moab locations of "Thelma & Louise" and "Geronimo" as well as the Salt Lake City locations of "The Sandlot" continue to draw tourists year after year.

All 50 states, hundreds of cities and counties across the nation, every Canadian province, several countries in Europe, every province in Australia, and more, have discovered the economic benefits of film and video production and the competition for projects is fierce.

In Utah, we are fortunate to have a fantastic infrastructure to service this industry: unsurpassed locations across the state --- we offer urban, suburban, rural, alpine, desert, lakeshores and farmland, high tech and no tech, the list goes on. We have cultivated a talented and professional work force with a great work ethic, and we have a proactive government and business community. Best of all, we have a supportive and cooperative community which can and does make all the difference in the world.

We don't need to tell you how to be gracious and hospitable --- we already know you are. What we would like to do is give you an idea of what you can expect when a film crew sets up in your home, neighborhood, or town.

The Phone Call

The Utah Film Commission receives a script for a feature film, television movie, or a storyboard for a commercial. In the course of reading, the staff makes a list of all the locations in the script and / or storyboard. They then take that list and try to match it with areas in the state that provide the specific locations.

The Utah Film Commission keeps a photo library of over 80,000 photos of locations, but could add another 80,000 and still not cover the entire state. A photo presentation of all the required locations is then assembled and sent off to the production company. If they like the locations, they will arrange for an on – site location scout so they can see the locations in person.

The Scout

As mentioned before, if the producers like the photos sent, they may send someone or a group of people to look at the locations in person. The Utah Film Commission will host them on this visit and try to further sell the area by informing them of our well-developed infrastructure of crew, talent and equipment.

The Shoot

The film commission gets the call that Utah locations have been selected to backdrop the project. Things now begin to move rapidly. It may only be a matter of weeks before the first wave of crew arrive to open a production office, secure all the locations with formal agreements, hire local cast and crew, and begin any set construction and set dressing needed. If it is a commercial shoot, they may arrive within a day.

"GOOD NEIGHBOR" CODE OF CONDUCT

TO RESIDENTS and NEIGHBORHOOD MERCHANTS

As soon as film crews arrive at your property and you become a filming host, both you and the crew become guests in the surrounding neighborhood. Although you may see hosting filming at your property as an inalienable right to engage in free enterprise, your neighbors may not share the same sentiments. It is incumbent on you and the film crews to conduct yourselves in a manner that ensures that filmmakers will be welcomed back into your neighborhood. By adhering to the following code of responsibility, you will be doing your part to keep Utah a film friendly place to do business.

1. When hosting filming in a neighborhood or business district, residents and merchants choosing to allow production at their property should do their part to be "good neighbors."
2. Neighbor's concerns should be properly addressed to ensure that the shoot, will go smoothly and be a positive experience for everyone involved.
3. Every effort should be made to ensure that crewmembers do not unduly disturb your neighbors especially if hosting. Filming requires preparation days involving construction to "dress" your property prior to actual shooting days.
4. It is a good idea to introduce yourself to your neighbors (if they don't know you already) to increase rapport. Personally notify them that filming will be taking place at your property or place of business, although many jurisdictions issuing film permits require notification to affected residents and merchants.
5. Discuss the company's parking plans prior to the shoot and convey any concerns voiced by your neighbors. This will avoid problems like blocked access to driveways or roads that can cause ill-will between you and your neighbors.
6. When appropriate, with advanced approval by the film company, inviting neighbors to view the filming or to have lunch with the crew will go a long way to improve neighborhood relations.
7. Hosting filming frequently can take a toll on your neighbors who may not receive the direct financial benefits that you enjoy. You may want to consider ways you can give something back to your community for the inconvenience such as support for local organizations or simply hosting a backyard barbeque.
8. When filming occurs at night, excessive bright lights and noise may disturb your neighbors. Be sure to discuss such activities with your neighbors who may be adversely impacted and make sure the production company addresses their concerns. People want to feel that they have been included in decisions about activities that may directly affect them.

Things You Need to Know

Contracts

The words show business mean just that... this is a business, even though everyone seems to be wearing casual and/ or outdoor sportswear on the set. Therefore, anyone doing business with the production company for which a fee has been negotiated should get a written contract in advance. A sample location agreement can be found in the back of this booklet.

Schedules, Insurance and Planning Ahead

Most problems between residents and the production company result from schedule conflicts. Everyone – the production company, the film commission, the police, your neighbors, businesses – involved in the production, should be aware of what is going to happen in advance, including any disruptions in routine foot or vehicle traffic. The film commission asks production companies to canvas the neighborhood no less than 3 days before a scheduled location shoot to apprise everyone affected. We also ask that companies provide fliers to residents outlining times of crew arrival and departure, temporary road closures, traffic interruptions, what action will be taking place, who the contacts are on set, insurance information, etc.

Any legitimate production company should be able and willing to provide proof of insurance against damage to property and personal injury. Don't hesitate to ask either the production company or the film commission (as they will be given a copy by the production company) for this proof before production starts.

Should any damage occur to your property during production – buildings, vehicles, equipment, landscape – you should let the production manager know in writing as soon as possible so insurance claims can be filed before they leave. Late claims received after the production office has closed can be difficult to resolve.

Street Closures – Blocking of Streets

This is more often than not the elephant in the living room for most residents. It is the nature of the beast that an awful lot of big trucks show up right along with the stars.

The Utah Film Commission has worked with several neighborhood associations and production companies in positioning base camps away from the actual location for the parking of most of the trucks, dressing rooms, catering and eating areas. The LDS Church has been very accommodating to production companies by allowing their parking lots to be used for this purpose, as have other churches and businesses with ample parking space. However, there are still a handful of trucks that need to be near the set and they can cause minor delays in maneuvering around them.

Add to this the closure of your street delaying access in and out of your neighborhood, altering routines – it can make even the best of friends frustrated at some point with one another.

It is best to remember that the shoot will end, and that these are Utahns doing a job they were hired to do. Remember to be flexible, but most of all HAVE FUN with it! So many factors go into shooting on-location: the script could be rewritten, the lead actor could fall ill, the weather could change, and

equipment could fail. A good rule of thumb is to always expect the unexpected. There is always an alternative plan!

LOCATION AGREEMENT SAMPLE

This agreement relates to the real property (herein referred to as the "Premises"), located at:

1. In consideration of our promise to pay you the sum of \$_____, you hereby grant us and our agents, employees and other persons connected with the production entitled _____ the following rights with respect to the Premises:

- A) The right to enter and remain upon the Premises with personnel and equipment for the purpose of photographing scenes on said Premises commencing on _____, weather permitting, and continuing through _____. In the event the production schedule is changed because of weather or otherwise, if we so elect, we shall be able to photograph the Premises on another date or dates to be determined by agreement between you and us. In such event, if we do not elect to photograph the Premises on another date (s), you agree to refund any monies advanced to you and agree that we shall be fully discharged from any obligation hereunder.
- B) The right to make recordings of the Premises on film or tape (herein referred to as Recordings), including exterior and interior shots of any buildings or other improvements located on said premises.
- C) The irrevocable right to photograph and use name connected with the Premises and to use the name in and in connection with the Recordings.
- D) The irrevocable right to use the Recordings taken by us in perpetuity in any manner and media as we may elect.

2. Any or all of the rights granted herein may be exercised by us, our agents, licensees, successors and assigns.

3. In consideration of the grant of rights set forth hereinabove, we agree to indemnify and hold you harmless from all injuries to person and properties (ordinary wear and tear excepted) caused, in whole or in part, by the following: (1) any breach by us of any undertaking or representation under this agreement, or (2) any negligent or willful acts by us (or our employees or agents) in connection with our activities on the Premises.

4. Nothing contained herein shall be construed to obligate us to broadcast any program containing the scenes which have been filmed or taped on the Premises or to use any name connected with the Premises in connection with any program. In any exclusive remedy shall be an action at law for damages.

5. We hereby warrant and represent that we have full right and authority to grant the rights herein contained. You hereby warrant and represent that you have full right and authority to grant the right herein contained.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Assistant Camera (A.C.): Responsible for the care / maintenance of the camera and all its associated pieces and parts. The First A.C. works closely with the Camera Operator and the Director of Photography at the camera, while the Second A.C. loads the film and runs the slate.

Assistant Director (A.D.): As assistant to the Director, the First A.D. runs the set, plans the cost-efficient scheduling of locations and talent, schedules the days' shooting and is responsible for carrying out the director's instructions. The Second A.D. signs actors in and out, handles paperwork relating to the number of scenes shot, and number of hours worked, and is usually the person in charge of Production Assistants.

Art Director: Designs and constructs sets for the production. He / she reports to the Production Designer.

Associate Producer: The top assistant to the Producer, usually the intermediary between the producer and the crew.

Best Boy: The head electrician responsible for getting power to the set. Reports to the Gaffer.

Camera Operator: Operates the camera during shooting.

Casting Director: Responsible for supplying actors for the film. Works with the Producer and Director.

Craft Services: Provides snacks, soft drinks, coffee, etc.

Director: Controls the action and dialogue in front of the camera. Translates the written word into visuals and dialogue.

Director of Photography (D.P.): Responsible for the “look” of the film; works with the Lighting Director to set up shots and camera moves. The D.P. has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that each scene is properly recorded on film. Sometimes called the Cinematographer.

Dolly Grip: Prepares the camera dolly and associated hardware, and operates the dolly during the shoot.

Editor: Cuts the film and splices it together. There is usually more than one editor on a large project.

Electrician: A member of the electrical department; reports to the Best Boy.

Executive Producer: Arranges financing, but may not be directly involved with the day-to-day production of the film.

Foley Artist: A sound effects artist who works on a special “Foley” stage where sound effects are recorded to match visuals such as doors closing, feet walking and windows breaking.

Gaffer: Works with the D.P. and the Lighting Director to light the scene. Handles the equipment.

Grip: Works with the lighting and camera departments. The backbone of a film shoot, grips are responsible for moving equipment and generally assisting the production team. The Key Grip is the head of the grip department.

Line Producer: Responsible for keeping the film’s costs down. Approves expenses, including locations, actors, and crew.

Location Manager: Scouts locations, negotiates use agreements with property owners. Works with Transportation Captain to make sure there is enough parking at the location; works with local officials to coordinate shooting schedules, is responsible for the condition of the locations after the shooting is finished.

Location Scout: Searches for the perfect locations, both in terms of artistic and logistic considerations. Often becomes the Location Manager once production has begun.

Mixer: Takes care of all sound levels in a studio, on location, and in post production. Head of the Sound Department.

Producer: Brings a specific production together. Chooses the screenplay, arranges financing, hires a director, helps in the casting process, and is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the shoot. Is involved with editing and all post-production and may also consult on marketing and distribution.

Production Assistant (P.A.): The “gophers” on the set. The job can include holding back onlookers, getting coffee, escorting actors to locations, acting as a stand-in while a shot is worked out, or performing any other tasks required to make the production run more smoothly.

Production Designer: Responsible for sets, props, costumes. Works closely with the Director to determine the overall “look” of the film.

Production Manager (P.M.): Makes the business deals, including hotel / housing, crew hiring, equipment rental and budget management. The P.M. works with the A. D. on scheduling and reviews production reports. The P.M. signs the checks.

Production Unit: The team of the Director, Camera Crew, Lighting Department, Sound Crew, Electricians and everyone else who works on the shoot.

Screenwriter: Writes a script, either from an original idea or from an existing book or story.

Script Supervisor: Keeps track of how many takes are made of each shot / scene, how long they ran, who was in them, and makes detailed notes about what took place (was her hat on or off? Glass half full or empty?) so situations can be recreated if they need to be re-shot. Also referred to as Continuity.

Slate: A board (usually black and white) placed in front of the camera at the beginning or end of each take of each scene, identifying the scene and take numbers, title of the picture, director and camera operator.

Special Effects: Can be either mechanical (breakaway chairs), optical (in-camera effects like speeding up the film), or a combination of both.

Stand-In: A member of the Production Team who takes the place of the actor while the Director, D.P. and Camera Operator set up the shot. Usually a P.A.

Stunt Coordinator: Stages the stunts and works with the stunt players. Responsible for the safety of all involved in the filming of a stunt.

Transportation Captain: Makes sure everyone gets to the location. Responsible for all vehicle movement and parking. All driver report to the Transportation Captain.

Unit Manager / Unit Production Manager (U.P.M.): Assists the Production Manager or the company's business manager with the day-to-day financial operation of the shoot. Sometimes also functions as a Location Scout.

Video Assist: Operates a small video system called a video tap that records everything the camera is recording. This allows the director to see what the Camera Operator sees.

Wardrobe: Not to be confused with the Costume Designer, the Wardrobe department handles the costumes on the set. Usually there is one department for men and one for women.

